

# Health & Fitness



TAKE THE STEP TOWARDS A FITTER YOU!

## 3 short-term fitness goals that can lead to long-term success

As New Year's Day 2025 approached, millions of individuals were preparing to make changes they hoped would improve their fitness. In a Forbes Health/One Poll survey of 1,000 adults in the months leading up to the start of 2025, nearly half (48 percent) of respondents indicated improving their physical fitness would be a top priority over the course of the new year.

Fitness-based resolutions are popular every year, but people who aspire to make such changes recognize how difficult it can be to achieve them. In fact, the Forbes Health/One Poll survey found that roughly 44 percent of respondents indicated their resolutions flamed out at the two- or three-month marker. Though there's no one-size-fits-all strategy for sticking

with and ultimately achieving a resolution, identifying short-term goals that can help people stay motivated can lead to long-term progress. Individuals who want to improve their physical fitness can consider these three short-term goals and use them as measuring sticks as they pursue more long-term objectives.

1. Aspire for incremental weight loss. Weight loss goals were the fourth most popular New Year's resolution for 2025 among participants in the Forbes Health/One Poll survey. Though that survey separated fitness goals from weight loss goals, the two are certainly linked. Individuals who aspire to lose 10 pounds undoubtedly recognize that such a goal cannot be achieved overnight, so why not aspire to lose small amounts of weight at predetermined intervals?

For example, if the end goal is losing 10 lbs., aim to lose two pounds by the end of January. Incremental progress can motivate individuals to stay the course and ultimately propel them toward achieving a more substantial, long-term goal.

2. Exercise for a predetermined number of days each week. Another way to gradually build toward achieving long-term fitness goals is to establish monthly minimum exercise sessions. Individuals accustomed to a sedentary lifestyle can resolve to exercise three days per week in the first month of their resolution, and then increase that by a day in the second month. A consistent schedule when designing this goal is imperative, which is why it can make more sense to plan for three days per week as opposed to 12 days per month.



3. Resolve to walk a mile per day. Walking is an accessible cardiovascular activity that can have a profound effect on overall health. Walking also can help condition sedentary individuals' bodies for more strenuous activity, which is a transition many people aspire to make when setting long-term fitness goals. A daily

one-mile walk won't require a significant commitment of time, but it can help acclimate the body to routine exercise. As the effects of a daily walk begin to take hold, individuals may find it easier to engage in more strenuous physical activities, making this an ideal stepping stone on the way to achieving long-term fitness

goals. Short-term goals can help people remain motivated as they pursue more substantial goals that take longer to achieve. Such an approach can be especially useful for individuals resolving to improve their physical fitness at the start of a new year.

## Tips to get children excited about exercise

Human beings need to engage in physical activity to stay healthy. But too many children are not getting the exercise they need. Only 50 percent of boys and less than 34 percent of girls between the ages of 12 and 15 are adequately fit, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Children who are not physically fit are at greater risk for chronic diseases. In addition, children who are overweight or obese are at a higher risk of retaining that extra weight into adulthood.

Getting children to exercise regularly can be an uphill battle with so many distractions, such as electronic devices, vying for their attention. But parents can explore the following ways to get children more excited about physical activity.

- Choose interactive toys. Select toys for kids that require movement. These can include sporting activities, scooters, bicycles, and even video games that involve physical activity. Kids will be moving while they play, which is a first step.

- Set an example. Children may be more likely to embrace physical activity if they see their parents exercising regularly. Adults can share their



passions for activities that encourage movement, whether it is hiking, heading to the gym, swimming, or rock scrambling.

- Make it a contest. People can be very competitive, especially young children. If kids know there is a prize or reward attached to doing something, they may have more motivation to engage with it. Offer a prize to the person who can log the most minutes of physical activity each week.

- Make things social. The more people involved in an activity, the greater the chance kids will want to be involved. Therefore, invite their friends, cousins, classmates, and other relatives to participate.

- Look for new ways to exercise. Plan vacations and day trips around an activity. Perhaps the family can learn how

to surf or snorkel on a trip; otherwise, a trip to the zoo or a museum can involve a lot of walking.

- Find reasons to walk. Kids and parents can walk to or from school each day to get exercise. Parking further away from stores ensures some extra steps as well. Take the stairs in malls instead of elevators or escalators.

- Encourage participation in team sports. Afterschool athletics often involve multiple days of practices and games or meets, which can be all the exercise a kid needs to be healthy. Athletics also present a fun way to exercise with friends.

Kids need physical activity to stay healthy, and there are various ways to make them more inclined to be active.

## Weight training for beginners

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, muscle-strengthening activities reduce the risk of falls and fractures, which is a notable benefit for adults of all ages, and particularly so for adults nearing an age where they might experience mobility issues. The National Institute on Aging notes that studies indicate as many as three in 10 individuals over age 70 experience mobility issues that affect their ability to walk, get up out of a chair and climb stairs. Adults in middle-age, and even those for whom retirement remains decades away, can prevent such issues by incorporating strength training into their workout regimens. Novices who want to do just that can heed these tips to avoid injury as their bodies acclimate to strength training.

- Work with a personal trainer. Fitness facilities typically have highly trained and knowledgeable personal trainers who can teach members the proper techniques in regard to various strength-building exercises. Many facilities offer one or two free personal trainer consultations to new members, and it's best that people of all ages take advantage of such benefits. Even if sessions are not complementary, working with a personal trainer is a

great way to learn proper form, which is vital to avoiding injury.

- Warm up before weight training. The Mayo Clinic notes that cold muscles are vulnerable to injury, so individuals should never begin weight training sessions without a pre-workout warmup. The fitness experts at Gold's Gym note that 10 minutes of light cardiovascular exercise on a treadmill, stationary bike or elliptical machine before strength training can increase range of motion, decrease risk for injury and help to create more change in muscles. If necessary, include a foam roll and stretch exercise in your warmup, targeting the muscles that will be used during the ensuing weight training session and any muscles that seem particularly tight. Foam rolling each muscle for 20 to 30 seconds can help to loosen them in advance of a workout.

- Start with light weights. The adage "Rome wasn't built in a day" is certainly applicable to weight training. Initial weight training sessions should involve light weights as the body acclimates to a new workout and individuals master the form for each exercise. Weight can be gradually increased as individuals acclimate to lifting weights, a process that the Mayo Clinic suggests can

unfold over two to four weeks. However, each individual is different, so if it takes longer than four weeks to add weight, so be it. The key in the early days is to master the form and help the body adjust.

- Lift slowly. The Mayo Clinic notes that using momentum during a set can lead to injury, as the goal is not to swing or lift the weights as quickly as possible. Slow repetitions that take about two seconds to lift the weight and four or more seconds to lower it can reduce injury risk and also activate muscle fibers in the targeted muscles, which makes strength training more effective over the long haul.

- Rest and take pain seriously. Rest is a vital part of a successful weight training regimen, and it's especially important for novices to rest in between sessions. The Mayo Clinic recommends resting muscles for at least 48 hours. Do not ignore sharp or shooting pain or assume it's a natural byproduct of the transition to strength training. Cease performing any exercise that causes such pain and consult your physician about what to do.

Weight training promotes long-term health, and beginners need not be intimidated by hitting the gym to build strength.

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# Health & Fitness

## Exercise solutions for busy people

Lack of time in the day to get enough done is a common lament. Work, family and social obligations have made many individuals busier than ever before, and that can eat into people's ability to find time for daily exercise.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says adults need to get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity per week, or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity. For the moderate-intensity recommendation, that boils down to about 21 minutes per day, which is manageable even for the busiest of individuals. To that end, there are some ways busy people can get the exercise they need.

- Wake up early. Starting your day 30 minutes early can allow you to fit exercise in before a day becomes hectic. Put workout gear out the night before, and when the alarm sounds in the morning, get up and out, whether it's to head to the gym or go for a morning walk or jog around the neighborhood.

- Use your lunch hour. If you're not a morning person, use a portion of your lunch break for exercise and then eat your lunch afterwards.

- Take part in high-intensity workouts. High-intensity exercise regimens typically pack exercises into routines that get the heart rate going, but don't require a lot of time. They may only be 20- to 30-minute sessions, which is doable for most people.

- Recognize exercise comes in many forms. Many people



would be surprised that activities they engage in each day can be classified as exercise. Intense gardening or lawn care sessions and even home cleaning and improvement projects can work the body. Also, exercise can be built into regular activities, such as taking the stairs rather than an elevator or parking further away in parking lots to ensure a lengthy walk.

- Consider doing the "Daily 50". The Daily 50 is an informal exercise routine that can occur anywhere and utilizes body weight to get the job done. Exercises can include 50 squats, 50 lunges, 50 wall push-ups, 50 crunches, and/or holding a plank position for 50 seconds. Some also perform 50 knee lifts or hold a wall sit for 50 seconds. These exercises don't require much time and work most of the major muscle groups.

- Exercise as a family. Turn family leisure time into enjoyable exercise time. Take hikes, go for bike rides or even kayaking trips together to get everyone up and moving.

Busy people can make time for exercise with some easy solutions.



## Fitness regimens for people over 50

Fitness is an important component of overall wellness. Indeed, staying active has been linked to a number of noteworthy benefits, including decreased disease risk and improved mental health.

Routine exercise helps a person burn calories and maintain a healthy weight. Tufts

Medicine says weight gain is common among aging individuals, with both men and women tending to put on weight in their mid-sections. Weight gain is a risk factor for diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Older adults may need to step up their fitness regimens to combat growing waistlines.

Staying active also can help with muscle and bone density, which can decline with age. The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons says exercise is important for maintaining bone strength as the body ages. Strength-training exercises put stress on bones so they can make bones stronger.

Now that it is apparent why fitness is key during senior years, it's time to explore some routines that may be best for people age 50 and older.

### Yoga

Yoga is a low-impact practice that improves muscle strength, balance, mobility, and flexibility. All of these factors are important for seniors. For those who find that conventional forms of yoga are too taxing on joints and bones,

chair yoga is a lower-impact form of the exercise.

### Cycling

Riding a bike is a cardiovascular workout that offers a wide range of benefits. Most people find riding a bike is easy on the joints, and regular cycling can increase muscle

strength and enhance flexibility. The pace and intensity of rides can be customized depending on riders' speed and the routes they ride.

### Pilates

Joseph Pilates developed an exercise routine that now bears his name in the early twentieth century. Pilates emphasizes core strength and stability, but works all the major muscle groups in the body. Since it is another low-impact exercise, it can be suitable for people with joint issues.

### Body weight exercises

As individuals age, they may find that working with dumbbells, barbells or weight equipment at the gym is too taxing. Using body weight to build strength is a low-intensity option. Squats, wall push-ups, chair push-ups, and resistance bands can be used to build strength.

### Walking

Walking is an unsung hero in the fitness realm. According to Better Health Channel, just 30 minutes of walking every day can increase cardiovascular fitness, strengthen bones, reduce excess body fat, and boost muscle power and endurance. Walking is low-impact and less taxing on joints than jogging or running.

Seniors have a host of options to stay active as they navigate their changing fitness needs.

## Staying active can help with muscle and bone density

## Ask The Trainer

by Dave Erickson - Owner Fit4Life/Women's Gym



## How to make your New Year Resolution Successful.

This time of the year, a lot of us are looking to make healthy changes. Most New Year Resolutions don't last, so let me share a tip to understand why these odds are so dismal and how to be successful this year.

First, let's define what willpower is. Willpower is simply the power of your will to do something you don't like. On a 1-10 scale you need 0 "willpower" to do something you love and 10 "willpower" to do something you absolutely hate.

The key to any successful permanent change in your life is not how to get more "willpower", but how to develop a liking of the change you want to make so it requires less and less willpower—the goal is for it to require zero willpower... become something you love.

**The process needs to go from: Tolerable → OK → Like → Love.**

Let's take the example of starting an exercise program at a gym. The first workout you are new, and self-conscious but with the help of a trainer who shows you the proper use of the equipment, you found it "tolerable" or maybe even "OK".

You still are nowhere near feeling comfortable in the gym after just one visit, so you have another session with the trainer. After a few sessions you start to feel comfortable and are beginning to really "like" your gym workouts. But you're still not fully self-confident and self-sufficient in the gym.

A few more weeks of enjoyable workouts with a trainer or experienced workout partner and you eventually get to a point where you are really looking forward to "gym day" and can honestly say you WANT to go to the gym!

Now you no longer need "willpower" to go to the gym. You have moved from Like → Love. You have **successfully created a new healthy habit** that requires zero willpower!

The key to getting something to require zero willpower is consistently experiencing positive emotions when doing the new thing. If each time you went to the gym you felt the same level of discomfort and incompetence, you'd have to continue to use high levels of willpower to force yourself to go. We are all automatically subconsciously compelled to avoid pain and discomfort, so you'd start telling everyone including yourself that you "don't have time to go to the gym" to rid yourself of the other pain of feeling bad about yourself not accomplishing your goal of making gym workouts a part of your healthy lifestyle.

This year, keep in mind that any healthy change you want to make you must transition from **(Tolerable → OK → Like → Love)**. To develop a Love for gym exercise you also need to be sure to focus on how great workouts make you feel rather than any frustration with the scale (that comes later when you apply the same process to healthy eating) and get the help you need to successfully make this transition.

See you in the gym in 2025!

-Dave

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